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SUBJECT The SALT II Agreement

JOHN CHANCELLOR: Public opinion polls have shown this year that the American people believe the Russians are likely to cheat on the SALT II treaty limiting nuclear weapons. This is a widely held belief despite the fact that officials in a position to know, including former Secretary of State Kissinger, say the Russians did not cheat in any meaningful way on the first SALT treaty.

In any case, verification of the treaty will be one of the key issues in the Senate debate on the treaty, and we've asked Ford Rowan to look into the whole business.

FORD ROWAN: What if the Russians cheat? Suppose they build bigger and better weapons than allowed by SALT? Would the United States find out?

The United States relies on space satellites and other electronic monitors to watch what the Soviets are doing. Pictures from spy-in-the-sky satellites are secret and much more detailed and revealing than these unclassified photographs. But the secrets have been compromised.

In two espionage cases, the Russians bought information about three satellite systems: Keyhole, which takes photographs; [unintelligible], which listens to missile telemetry; and Argus, monitors radio transmissions.

But the biggest problem started back on Earth, in Iran, when the U.S. was forced to close down monitoring stations near the Soviet border, a major loss, according to the former head of Air Force Intelligence.

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